



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# News Release

Office of Public Affairs  
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420  
(202) 461-7600  
[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
September 12, 2000

*WASHINGTON, D.C.* — Veterans and their survivors are expected to receive \$1.9 trillion in disability compensation and payments for service-connected deaths during the next 70 years as the nation fulfills its obligation to care for former service members.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) second "Annual Benefits Report" shows its programs touch millions of lives, with approximately 2.3 million of the nation's 24.4 million veterans directly compensated each month for injuries or illnesses connected with their military service.

"This new report is a reminder of the depth of the nation's commitment to those who have sacrificed to preserve our freedom," VA Under Secretary for Benefits Joseph Thompson said. "Our beneficiaries include the 311,000 survivors of veterans whose deaths while in uniform -- or after discharge from a service-connected condition -- reflect the ultimate sacrifice in serving one's country."

A new section of the annual report is an estimate of future costs to provide compensation to veterans and survivors. The 70-year projection shows that spending for disability compensation and survivors payments will peak at \$37.3 billion in 2032, then decline to an annual cost of \$10.8 billion by 2069.

Direct payments to individuals for their service-connected disabilities at the start of the current fiscal year totaled more than one billion dollars a month. In a breakdown by period of service, the report shows that veterans who served in the military during the time of the Vietnam War were the largest group receiving service-connected disability benefits, representing 735,627 of the 2.3 million, compared to 541,225 World War II veterans and 282,140 veterans of the Gulf War time period.

In addition, 378,712 veterans are receiving VA pensions as wartime veterans who are permanently and totally disabled from other injuries or diseases.

In VA's home loan guaranty program, the report shows that of the loans to purchase homes at the beginning of the current fiscal year, about 56 percent had gone to first-time homeowners. In addition to the 2.3 million loans to purchase homes, there were 884,457 refinancing loans, most for interest rate reductions.

More than 72 percent of the 243,453 beneficiaries who used VA education benefits at the beginning of the current fiscal year qualified under the active-duty provisions of the Montgomery GI Bill; reservists accounted for nearly 19 percent. Less than one percent of beneficiaries were covered by the older Post-Vietnam Era Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP). The program for certain eligible dependents of veterans accounted for eight percent of education beneficiaries.

Millions of veterans are covered by the VA insurance program. In 1999 alone, more than a quarter million new people were covered, with coverage totaling more than \$47 billion.

The vocational rehabilitation and employment program, which provides job training for veterans with service-connected impairments or disabilities, successfully trained and found employment for approximately 10,000 individuals in 1999.

The Annual Benefits Report, which is available on the Internet at <http://www.vba.va.gov/reports.htm>, is intended to identify the level of veteran participation in VA benefit programs. Clear data on the use of VA programs is important to improve VAs "business process" to make VA more user-friendly.

The dozens of tables and analyses in the new report provide considerable information about the veterans who use VA programs, including age and race breakdowns for veterans of different military conflicts or peacetime periods.